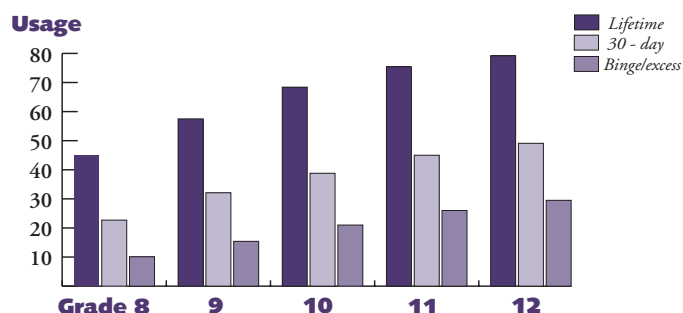


maine facts

What you should know about teen alcohol use in our state

To support Maine's parents and their children, the Office of Substance Abuse recently researched alcohol use and abuse among adolescents in grades 8 through 12. In addition to this 2002 Maine Youth Drug and Alcohol Use Survey (MYDAUS), a random phone survey¹ of parents across Maine asked what *parents* believed was happening in their households with regards to underage alcohol use. The following results are enlightening.



- Lifetime—students reporting use of alcohol (more than just a few sips on at least one occasion)
- 30 day—students reporting use of alcohol on at least one occasion in the past 30 days
- Binge—students reporting having 5 or more alcoholic drinks in a row, students reporting use of alcohol on at least one occasion in the past 2 weeks.

The Maine truth: what Maine parents believe is not what Maine teens say!

PARENTS: **83%** believe that their child has not had more than a few sips of alcohol in their life.

TEENS: **65%** report they have had more than a few sips of alcohol in their life.

PARENTS: **98%** believe that their child has not been drinking alcohol in the month before the parent survey took place.

TEENS: **38%** report they have been drinking alcoholic beverages in the past 30 days.

PARENTS: **99%** believe that their child has not been drinking alcohol to excess (five or more drinks in a row within two weeks prior to the survey).

TEENS: **20%** report they had participated in at least one episode of drinking to excess (five or more drinks in a row within two weeks prior to the survey).

PARENTS: **90%** believe that if their child drank alcohol without their permission, they would catch her/him.

TEENS: **64%** report that their parent(s) would not catch them drinking if they were to drink without their parent's permission.

54% of PARENTS
are probably **WRONG**...if
they believe they would
catch their teen drinking.

¹ Conducted by Strategic Marketing Services on behalf of the Maine Office of Substance Abuse in 2002.

Perceptions versus **FACT**

Teens mistakenly perceive that their peers are drinking more than they really are. Parents often perceive that they would know if their teen was using or abusing alcohol. Whatever your perceptions are, it is helpful to know the facts.

parents:

WHAT PARENTS BELIEVE *It's someone else's kid.*

THE FACTS: Most parents underestimate the extent to which their teen is at risk. Only 17% of the parents surveyed believed their child has ever had a drink. If you assume that it's "someone else's kid" who is drinking, ask yourself the question—do you really know? Monitor your teen's behavior, talk to them about the negative impact of alcohol on their lives.

WHAT PARENTS BELIEVE *My teen is honest with me.*

THE FACTS: Most parents surveyed (97% of moms, 91% of dads) felt that their teens shared their thoughts with them. But when it comes to getting the straight scoop, many kids report it differently. Only 50% of the teens agreed that they share their thoughts and feelings with their fathers, 66% with their mothers. Keep talking and dig deeper. Encourage conversation—ask questions that require more than just "yes" or "no" answers.

WHAT PARENTS BELIEVE *I would know if they used alcohol.*

THE FACTS: 90% Maine parents believe this; only 36% of the teens surveyed agreed. Trust but verify; talk to your teens before they go out—and when they return home.

teens:

WHAT TEENS BELIEVE *Everyone drinks in my school.*

THE FACTS: While 38% of Maine students reported having had a drink in the last 30 days, they are in the minority. Encourage your teen to question their assumptions and help them realize that everyone else isn't drinking.

WHAT TEENS BELIEVE *It doesn't matter, I'll be 21 soon.*

THE FACTS: It does matter; 40% of kids who begin drinking before age 15 will develop alcohol abuse or dependence at some point in their lives¹. That proportion drops to below 10% for those who begin drinking after age 21. Alcohol affects teens and adults differently. It's worth the wait. (See The Medical Impact section in this Parent Kit.)

WHAT TEENS BELIEVE *Alcohol won't hurt me.*

THE FACTS: Alcohol hurts kids. In addition to drunk driving, alcohol is a major cause of many other types of fatal accidents including drownings, burns, falls, and alcohol poisoning from drinking too much, too fast. It makes young people more susceptible to sexual assault and unprotected sex.

¹ (NIAAA) National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, Washington, D.C. Alcohol Alert No. 35, PH 371, January 1997.